



Commonwealth of Kentucky Public Protection Cabinet

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Time Change Triggers Kentuckians to ‘Change the Batteries’ *Only working smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors save lives*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Oct. 29, 2014) – Kentuckians “fall back” this weekend to standard time, and the Public Protection Cabinet’s Division of Fire Prevention reminds Kentuckians that it’s the perfect time to change the batteries in smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors to ensure they are working properly.

“Early warning is paramount to getting out of a house fire alive,” said Kentucky State Fire Marshal William Swope. “Fire can quickly spread throughout a home, blocking escape routes and filling rooms with deadly smoke. There is no sugar-coating the message that having working smoke detectors in your home increases the chances that you and your family will get out of a burning home alive.”

According to data reported to the National Fire Protection Association, from 2007-2011, three of every five home fire deaths resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms. No smoke alarms were present in more than one-third, or 37 percent, of the home fire deaths. In one-quarter, or 23 percent, of the home fire deaths, smoke alarms were present but did not sound.

“The statistics tell a tragic story,” said Swope. “To protect your family from a home fire, install smoke alarms and check the batteries on a regular basis. And if your home doesn’t have a carbon monoxide detector, get one.”

The Division of Fire Prevention offers these safety tips:

- When installing or replacing smoke alarms consider using those equipped with dual technology (to cover different types of fires) and a 10-year lithium battery to include those that are hard-wired.

- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each separate sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement. Interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.
- Test alarms at least monthly by pushing the test button.
- Smoke rises. Install smoke alarms, following manufacturer's instructions, high on a wall or on a ceiling. Save manufacturer's instructions for testing and maintenance.
- Replace batteries in all smoke alarms at least once a year. If an alarm "chirps," warning the battery is low, replace the battery right away.
- Replace all smoke alarms, including alarms that use 10-year batteries and hard-wired alarms, when they are 10-years-old or sooner if they do not respond properly.
- Be sure the smoke alarm has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Alarms that are hard-wired (and include battery backup) must be installed by a qualified electrician.
- If cooking fumes or steam sets off nuisance alarms, replace the alarm with an alarm that has an alarm silencing button. An alarm silencing button will reduce the alarm's sensitivity for a short period of time.
- Smoke alarms that include a recordable voice announcement in addition to the usual alarm sound, may be helpful in waking children through the use of a familiar voice.
- Smoke alarms are available for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. These devices use strobe lights. Vibration devices can be added to these alarms.
- Smoke alarms are an important part of a home escape plan.

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